



# Teaching Technology

## JSC employees share wonders of science, math, engineering

By Mae Mangieri

More than 190 civil service and contractor employees left their busy jobs at JSC to spend time with students and teachers for National Engineers Week last month. Their purpose was to motivate students to pursue science, mathematics and technical courses and to demonstrate how those subjects apply to real-world careers.

Although most of the volunteers included engineering and technical professionals, individuals with various backgrounds also helped, as did members from senior management and retired JSC employees. To better handle the 400 presentation requests, JSC's Education Outreach Program began a new working partnership with local contractors to increase the number of volunteers. The successful partnership added more than 70 new participants from Loral, McDonnell Douglas and Rockwell to visit 117 different schools along with 120 JSC employees.

The volunteers visited schools close to JSC as well as schools in the Aldine, Channelview, Deer Park, Humble, Houston and North Forest independent school districts. They brought exhibits such as space food, Apollo lunar boots and gloves, space shuttle tiles and visual aids such as NASA videos, slides and hands-on activities. Most important, they brought real-life work experiences and shared their unique space-related knowledge with the students.

Keith Van Tassel of the Propulsion and Power Division gave a presentation on pyrotechnics and parachutes to two very enthusiastic science classes at Clear Lake Intermediate School.

"It gets more fun every year," Van Tassel said. "The kids were really enthusiastic about learning about science and space and they were really interested in getting their hands on the hardware."

Van Tassel was well-received by the students and their teacher. "Mr. Van Tassel related extremely well with my students," wrote Clear Lake Intermediate School Science Teacher Susan McCullough. "They are an inquisitive bunch, and their activity level is sometimes very exhausting. I learned quite a few things myself from Mr. Van Tassel's presentation. Students are always full of questions, and many times a teacher does not possess all of the answers."

One Education Outreach Program objective is to assist teachers in preparing students for

the work force by providing information and a presence in the classroom. National Engineers Week is a significant opportunity to accomplish this educational commitment to the community. In a thank-you note to Andrew Sylvester of the Systems Engineering Simulator, Principal Gilberto De Leon from Matthys Elementary School in Pasadena expressed his gratitude.

"Many times, students of this socioeconomic environment do not get a chance to see examples of professional people outside of education," De Leon wrote. "You do not know what a valuable contribution you made in the lives of these young individuals."

National Engineers Week is an annual event to increase public awareness and appreciation of engineers and their work. More than 3 million engineers, teachers, and students participated nationwide. Engineers and other volunteers visited classrooms to show students how math, science and engineering create the world around them and to introduce them to technical careers.

JSC's Education Outreach Program provides volunteers for schools in the local educational community throughout the year, and new volunteers are always needed. As a volunteer, employees can help educators reach students by participating as guest speakers, science fair judges, tutors, mentors and E-mail mentors. Time spent participating in an approved Education Outreach event is official duty time, and civil service employees may charge their volunteer time, up to 40 hours per calendar year, to a special education labor code.

For more information about the Education Outreach Program, call x32929. □

From top to bottom:

1) Safety, Reliability and Quality Assurance Director Charles Harlan explains to Jerelyn Perroni, left, and Jonathon McGee, 8th grade honors science students at Clear Lake Intermediate School, how a van de Graff generator uses a rubbing belt, mechanical energy, to create sparks of static electricity.

2) Jesus Cabrera of Loral shows 5th grade math students Hector Gamez, left, and Nancy DeLeon at Pomeroy Elementary School in Pasadena how to construct a rocket powered by the pressure generated from an antacid tablet reacting with water.

3) Sixth-grade science students Brian Buckner, left, and Julie Salarv at Clear Lake Intermediate School try to pack the Orbiter Pilot Parachute back into its bag.

4) Keith Van Tassel of the Propulsion and Power Division instructs 6th grade students Scott Moore, center, and Jacques Pryor at Clear Lake Intermediate School how to assemble space flight hardware.



JSC Photos  
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**NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK**  
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